

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 07591 151832Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-15 AID-05 COME-00 EB-08 FRB-01 TRSE-00 XMB-04
OPIC-06 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 FEA-01 OES-06 /124 W
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R 151823Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0620
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

UNCLAS PARIS 07591

E.O.11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR PINS ET
SUBJ: INTERVIEW WITH ERITREAN LEADER

1. OUSMAN SABEH SALEH, LEADER OF THE ELF-PLF, GAVE AN INTERVIEW DURING THE AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT IN CAIRO TO PHILIPPE DECRAENE WHICH APPEARS IN LE MONDE OF MARCH 16. SALEH SAYS IDEOLOGICAL DISPUTES BETWEEN THE THREE ERITREAN LIBERATION GROUPS SHOULD BE SUSPENDED IN FAVOR OF THE FIGHT FOR NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE. A MARXIST GOVERNMENT IN ERITREA WOULD PROVOKE FRATRICIDAL FIGHTING AND FOREIGN INTERVENTION, HE CLAIMS; A MODERATE GOVERNMENT IS NEEDED.

2. SALEH EXCLUDES BOTH A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE AND THE FORMATION OF AN ERITREAN GOVERNMENT UNTIL THE
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LIBERATION GROUPS ACHIEVE UNITY. IF THAT HAPPENS, HE ASSERTS ERITREAN CITIES, INCLUDING ASMARA, WILL BE IMMEDIATELY OCCUPIED AND A GOVERNMENT OF UNION CONSTITUTED ON ERITREAN TERRITORY.

3. SALEH STATES THAT THE OIL-PRODUCING COUNTRIES AND THE US WILL NEVER ABANDON THE HORN TO THE SOVIETS AND

CUBANS. THE ARAB WORLD WOULD NOT REMAIN
INDIFFERENT TO THEIR INTERVENTION. THE CHIEFS OF STATE
AT THE KHARTOUM CONFERENCE MADE IT CLEAR, HE SAYS,
THAT THE RED SEA SHOULD REMAIN BOTH AN ARAB LAKE AND A
ZONE OF STABILITY.

4. ASKED ABOUT FOREIGN SUPPORT, SALEH SAYS IRAQ AND
SYRIA HAVE ALWAYS AIDED AND CONTINUE TO AID THE ELF.
FOR A LONG TIME, LIBYA DID TOO, BUT DESPITE HIS
PERSONAL PLEAS TO QADHAFI, LIBYA STOPPED ITS AID AND
"FLEW TO ETHIOPIA'S ASSISTANCE". KUWAIT, QATAR, AND
ABU DHABI ALSO HELP AND "WE HAVE MUCH HOPE IN THE SUPPORT
OF THE RIYAD GOVERNMENT WHICH PRINCE SAOUD, THE FOREIGN
MINISTER, HAS OFFICIALLY PROMISED US".

5. FOR THE MOMENT, HE SAYS, THE ELF DOES NOT INTEND
TO ESTABLISH FEDERAL OR CONFEDERAL TIES WITH SUDAN,
BUT AN ERITREAN GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO STUDY THE
QUESTION. SALEH DISCOUNTS THE POSSIBILITY OF UN OR
OAU ASSISTANCE TO THE ELF.
GAMMON

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